(c) and (d) Some sugar mills in Karnataka had requested the Central Government for expeditious lifting of unlifted quantities of levy sugar allotted on them. The Central Government considered this request and released a compensatory quantity of 12,911.7 MTs for freesale and permitted the concerned sugar factories to sell it in the open market, while retaining their levy obligations. Some mills were also given advance releases of freesale sugar, subject to adjustment, as per the government guidelines in the matter.

Proposal of Pakistan for a strategic restraint regime

3321. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press by Pakistan Embassy in Washington on 15th June, 2000 that Pakistan had proposed to India a strategic restraint regime for avoidance of arms race — nuclear or conventional and confidence building in the region;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan was willing to consider any restraint arrangements on a reciprocal basis with India; and

(c) if so, what is the Government's reaction to such a press statement by Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Pakistan has suggested that India and Pakistan adhere to a strategic restraint regime for avoidance of an arms race, nuclear and conventional, and confidence building in the region.....on a reciprocal basis.

(c) This proposal is not new and remains based on Pakistan's desire to seek parity with India; it has been put forward with propagandist intent. India has taken the lead in initiating discussions at the bilateral level on formalisation of restraint in the region including during PM's historic visit to Lahore in February, 1999. Unfortunately Pakistan's armed intrusion in Kargil and its repudiation of mutually agreed upon confidence-building measures and agreements, has set this process back. Pakistan needs to take necessary steps to restore trust to enable this process to resume.

Fake passport racket busted by Bangalore Police

3322. SHRI K. C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that Bangalore City Police have recently busted the fake passport racket;

(b) if so, whether there is any proposal to order for an enquiry into the passports reportedly obtained by producing fake documents; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to check the production of fake documents like ration cards, bank passbooks etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) The Passport Office at Bangalore had recently suspected that fake documents were being used to apply for passports and reported the matter to the police.

(b) Enquiries conducted by Passport Office, Bangalore regarding the 28 passports seized by the police have determined that they were not obtained on the basis of fake documents.

(c) The Passport Office, Bangalore is cooperating fully with the police to identify the instances of fake documents. The officials in the Passport Office have been instructed to exercise more vigilance in this regard.

Smuggling of Indians Abroad

3323. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have asked various Intelligence agencies in the country to investigate multi crore racket of organised smuggling of Indians abroad;

(b) if so, the *modus operandi* of such racket;

(c) whether there is involvement of embassy staff and airlines posted abroad; and

(d) if so, by when full facts in this regard would be brought to light?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Getting passports and visas through unscrupulous agents

†3324. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the people who wish to go abroad and they sell their property etc. and get passport and visa through unscrupulous agents and on being caught everything is found fake;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.